



Department of Justice

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Eastern District of California

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, July 18, 2008
www.usdoj.gov/usao/cae
Docket #: 08-cr-08-LJO

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BAKERSFIELD MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO USING LASER TO INTERFERE WITH SHERIFF HELICOPTER

FRESNO, Calif.—United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott, Federal Bureau of Investigation Special Agent-in-Charge Drew S. Parenti, and Kern County Sheriff Donny Youngblood announced today that JARED JAMES DOOLEY, 28, of Bakersfield, California, entered a guilty plea in federal court today to attempting to interfere with the safe operation of a Kern County Sheriff's Department helicopter by shining a handheld laser into the cockpit.

The case is the product of an investigation conducted by the Bakersfield Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF), comprised of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Kern County Sheriff's Department, and other local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Karen A. Escobar, who is prosecuting the case, DOOLEY admitted that on November 8, 2007, at about 10:55 p.m., he intentionally pointed a green laser beam at, and illuminated the cockpit of, a Kern County Sheriff's Department helicopter that was flying at 500 feet above ground-level during a routine patrol in Bakersfield, California. When the light hit the cockpit, it disoriented the Kern County Sheriff's pilot, causing pain and discomfort in his eyes for a couple of hours. Lasers, an acronym for Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation, pose a safety hazard to flight operations. The focused beams of a laser remain powerful at extended viewing distances and can expose pilots to radiation levels above those considered to be flight safe. Brief exposure to even a

relatively low-powered laser beam can cause discomfort and temporary visual impairments, such as glare, flash blind, and afterimages.

According to court documents, the pilot and a tactical observer were able to pinpoint the origin of the laser beam at DOOLEY's Bakersfield residence. On November 27, task force members executed a federal search warrant, locating a handheld green laser device in DOOLEY's pickup truck and a red laser device in his home. DOOLEY and his girlfriend, KENDRA CHRISTINE SNOW, 26, of Bakersfield, who is also charged, later admitted to law enforcement agents that they had used the green laser device on the night of the incident. SNOW told investigating agents that she and DOOLEY were standing in the driveway on November 8 and "taking turns shining the laser around watching the tracers in the sky." They also indicated they had purchased the green laser device from a Radio Shack store sometime in October. The FBI confirmed that Radio Shack sells an identical laser device, which retails for approximately \$50 and has warning labels printed on the device and the instruction guide.

According to a 2005 Congressional research report, a rash of incidents involving lasers aimed at aircraft cockpits has raised concerns over the potential threat to aviation safety and security.

United States Attorney Scott stated, "The U.S. Attorney's Office is committed to enforcing federal laws designed to protect innocent lives and promote aviation safety."

Resident Agent-in-Charge of the FBI Bakersfield Office David Gelios emphasized, "This case demonstrates the risks of lasers when not properly used. Not only the safety of the pilot and passenger were placed in jeopardy by the defendants' actions in this case, so were countless civilians on the ground. Many lasers are over 10 times more powerful than the typical red laser pointers used in the classroom or workplace and can cause significant damage to the eyes.

Anyone with information regarding the use of lasers to interfere with aircrafts should contact the FBI.” The number for the Bakersfield Office of the FBI is (661) 323- 9665.

DOOLEY faces a maximum prison sentence of 20 years and a \$250,000 fine. The actual sentence, however, will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables and any applicable statutory sentencing factors.

His sentencing is scheduled for October 10, 2008 at 9:00 AM before United States District Judge Lawrence J. O’Neill. SNOW is next scheduled to appear in court on August 1, 2008.

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